

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 FPC-01 INT-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 NIC-01

ACDA-19 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 STR-08

PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 L-03 H-02 RSR-01 /207 W

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R 110955 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3034

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 4409

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, JA, US, UR

SUBJECT: YAKUTSK GAS DEVELOPMENT

REF: TOKYO 1131

SUMMARY: IN APPARENT MOVE TO PUT PRESSURE ON USG, SOVIETS HAVE INDICATED TO JAPAN THEIR DESIRE TO PROCEED WITH TALKS ON YAKUTSK GAS DEVELOPMENT ON BILATERAL (USSR- JAPAN) BASIS, WITH EXTENT OF US PARTICIPATION TO BE LEFT TO JAPANESE. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATIVES IN JAPAN INFORMED HIROSHI ANZAI, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATURAL GAS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE JAPAN SOVIET ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMITTEE, THAT SOVIET UNION INTENDED TO PROCEED WITH DISCUSSION ON YAKUTSK NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON BILATERAL (USSR- JAPAN) BASIS, RATHER THAN TRILATERAL BASIS, INCLUDING US, AS HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY AGREED. SOVIETS ALSO REPORTEDLY TOLD ANZAI THAT SINCE JAPAN WOULD TAKE LEAD, INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR PIPELINE ROUTE SHOULD BE REVISED SO THAT PIPELINE WOULD BE BUILT FROM YAKUTSK TO NORTHERN SAKHALIN THEN TO HOKKAIDO. UNDER NEW PLAN, LIQUIFACTION PLANT WOULD BE

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BUILT IN JAPAN INSTEAD OF AT OLGA IN SOVIET UNION.

2. EMBOFF MET WITH TAKEO MURAKAMI, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TOKYO GAS (OF WHICH ANZAI IS BOARD CHAIRMAN), APRIL 10 TO DISCUSS SOVIET MOVE. ACCORDING MURAKAMI, SOVIET TRADE REPS CALLED ON ANZAI MARCH 23, ON INSTRUCTIONS, WITH WORD THAT USSR INTENDED TO " DISREGARD" US AND TO DEVELOP YAKUTSK GAS PROJECT ON BILATERAL BASIS. EXTENT OF US PARTICIPATION AND CONSUMPTION OF GAS PRODUCED WOULD BE LEFT FOR JAPAN TO DECIDE. MURAKAMI ALSO CONFIRMED THAT SOVIETS HAD PRESENTED REVISED PLAN FOR PIPELINE TO HOKKAIDO. MURAKAMI ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT SOVIET ACTION INTENDED ONLY TO PUSH US TO MAKE DECISION ON YAKUTSK PROJECT. HIS BELIEF SUBSTANTIATED BY FACT THAT SOVIETS HAD TOLD ANZAI THEY HAD NO OBJECTION TO HIS LEAKING CONTENTS OF SOVIET DECISION TO JAPANESE PRESS. HE HAD THUS RECOMMENDED TO ANZAI THAT NO HASTY ACTION BE TAKEN TO ACCEPT SOVIET REQUEST.

3. MURAKAMI NOTED THAT PROSE, PRESIDENT OF TEXAS EASTERN LNG, HAD PREVIOUSLY PLANNED TRIP TO JAPAN BEGINNING APRIL 19, AND JAPANESE PLANNED FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH PROSE BEFORE REPLYING TO SOVIET APPROACH. MURAKAMI THEN SPOKE EMPHATICALLY ABOUT DESIRABILITY, FROM TECHNOLOGICAL, CAPITAL, AND POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW OF FULL US- JAPAN COOPERATION IN YAKUTSK PROJECT, GIVING DISTINCT IMPRESSION NOTHING HAD OCCURRED TO CHANGE PREVIOUSLY STATED JAPANESE POSITION THAT IT UNABLE TO GO IT ALONE ON YAKUTSK (TOKYO 1131).

4. COMMENT: SOVIET SHIFT IN POLICY ON LEADERSHIP OF YAKUTSK PROJECT IS THIRD SUCH FLIP- FLOP IN NINE MONTHS. IN AUGUST OF 1972 WHEN US- USSR TRADE TALKS SEEMED TO BE DRAGGING, USSR " SHIFTED" THE LEADERSHIP TO JAPAN (TOKYO 8614); IN DECEMBER WHEN THE GOJ WAS NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH ON SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT TO SUIT SOVIETS IT WAS BACK TO US (TOKYO 13389); AND NOW BACK TO JAPAN AGAIN IN ATTEMPT TO SPUR US DECISION MAKING ON YAKUTSK.
INGERSOLL

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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